

Baltimore City Subdivision Regulations: Summary of Key Changes



Procedures

Category	Existing	Proposed
Subdivision Types	No differentiation.	Subdivisions categorized as either "Major" or "Minor" with 5 sub-categories of Major Subdivisions and 4 sub-categories of Minor Subdivisions.
Review Procedures	All subdivisions subject to the same review process.	<p>Minor Subdivisions eligible for 1 public meeting: an administrative meeting before the Planning Commission, i.e. on its "Consent Agenda", subject to certain conditions.</p> <p>Major Subdivisions must have 2 public meetings: first on the Planning Commission Regular Agenda (for Preliminary Plans), then on its Consent Agenda (for Final Plans).</p>
Plan Submittal Requirements	Submittal must include a subdivision plan and a development plan (with specific requirements for each) in order to be considered a complete application.	<p>Same, but if the subdivision is for disposition purposes only and no new development is proposed, the development plan may proceed through reviews showing only the allowable building envelope.</p> <p>Major subdivisions and lot splits which proceed through the Preliminary and Final Plans phases showing the building envelope(s) only must return to Planning Commission for future Revised Final Development Plan approval. Effected lots will be flagged in the City's Real Property system, and all applications for building permit will be subject to this additional requirement.</p>



Procedures (cont.)

Notification Requirement	None specified, but the Department of Planning notifies affected community groups as a matter of policy.	Applicant must fulfill an official notice requirement, with copies of preliminary plans sent via certified mail to community groups and directly adjacent owners, as provided by Planning staff.
Waivers	Planning Commission has waiver authority over all provisions of the <i>Subdivision Regulations</i> , with easy to meet conditions for granting the waiver.	Similarly broad waiver authority granted to the Planning Commission. Only one instance in which a waiver may be granted by the Director of Planning (Existing Conditions Plan requirement). If a Planning Commission waiver is sought, the request must be made in a public meeting, effectively triggering Major Subdivision review process.



Design Standards/Sustainability

Category	Existing	Proposed
Lot Frontage Requirements	Residential lot frontage requirements shown in tabular format, which is confusing to interpret and conflicts with zoning.	New definition created for "panhandle lots", which are now simply prohibited. Subdivisions to create lots with no public or private frontage other than that which may exist on an alley or lane are also prohibited.
Environmental Regulations	Heavy on flood plain content, but little mention of other regulations.	Comprehensive listing of all environmental regulations that may apply, including: Flood Plain, Critical Area, Forest Conservation, Green Building requirements, and new stormwater management requirements. Code references and hotlinks provided for all.
Sustainable Site Design	Odd and one-time only reference to a solar access diagram requirement, which is never enforced.	Statement of City commitment to proactively applying sustainability elements to neighborhood planning, master planning, and development review functions. Developers asked to incorporate a list of 12 sustainable design principles into their projects to the greatest extent possible. Link provided to the Baltimore City Sustainability Plan.



Design Review

Category	Existing	Proposed
Architectural Building Elevations	One set of elevations and/or perspectives must be filed with all Final Plans, but no explicit design review authority is stated, nor any design review criteria mentioned – leading to ambiguity.	For all new construction + exterior renovations/additions, architectural building elevations must be reviewed and approved by a staff architect, based on a list of 7 criteria.



Clean-up

Category	Existing	Proposed
Definitions	Minimally altered in decades.	All definitions conformed with those already existing in City code or the proposed new Zoning Code. New definitions added where needed.
Penalties	Incorrect reference to the section of the City Charter dealing with the "Department of Planning: Subdivisions" and the imposition of penalties for violation of the <i>Subdivision Regulations</i> . Currently, no penalties for violation exist in City Code.	New charter reference. A companion City Code amendment is needed to enact penalties.
Code References	Not updated with successive revisions to the <i>Subdivision Regulations</i> . Many have been amended or replaced or are otherwise invalid.	Corrected all code references and employed a consistent hotlink approach for eventual web publication of the document.